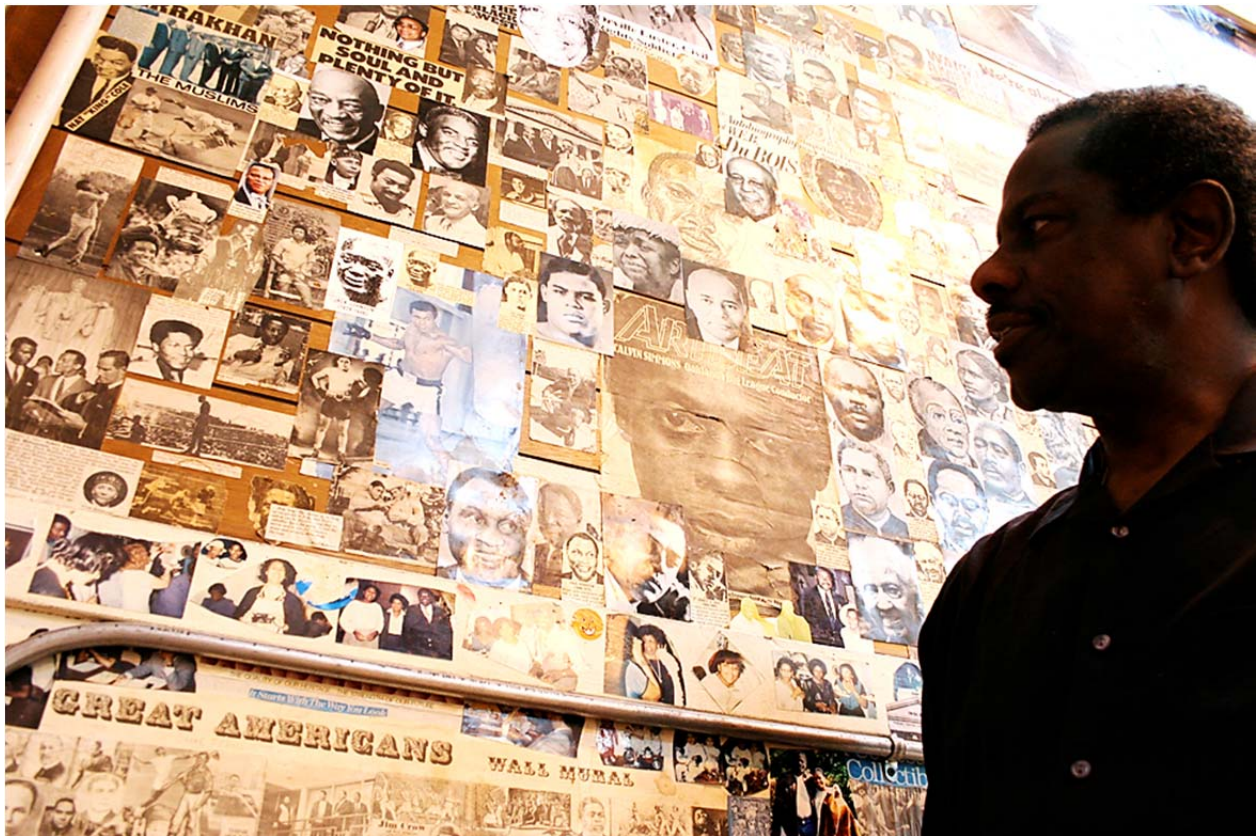




LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center and *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* 1345 Ocean Avenue

Initiated by the Historic Preservation Commission, May 5, 2016
Approved by the Board of Supervisors, November 15, 2016
Signed by Mayor Edwin M. Lee, November 22, 2016

Landmark No.
273

Cover: Reverend Roland Gordon standing in front of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* (Photo Credit: KQED)

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven-member body that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the designation of landmark buildings and districts. The regulations governing landmarks and landmark districts are found in Article 10 of the Planning Code. The HPC is staffed by the San Francisco Planning Department.

This Draft Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the initiation and designation process. Only language contained within the Article 10 designation ordinance, adopted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, should be regarded as final.

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Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center **and *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*** **1345 Ocean Avenue**

Church construction date: 1923
Architect: Joseph A. Leonard

Mural creation date: 1980-present
Artist: Reverend Roland Gordon

OVERVIEW

Constructed in 1923, Ingleside Presbyterian Church and Community Center at 1345 Ocean Avenue, which anchors the corner of Ocean and Granada avenues, is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period and method of construction and represents the work of a master architect. With its tripartite composition, symmetrically composed façade, dentiled cornice, and centrally located, full-height portico capped with a pediment and supported by Ionic columns and pilasters, the Ingleside Presbyterian Church illustrates the distinctive characteristics of the Neoclassical style that was popular in the decades following Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian exposition.¹ Architect Joseph A. Leonard was well known in the area for the "magnificent" Craftsman homes he built in his Richmond Heights (circa 1910) development and subsequent venture, Ingleside Terraces, (1912) where he also resided when he was chosen as the church's architect. The temple and Ingleside Presbyterian Church stand as one of the few extant examples of Leonard's ecclesiastical and institutional architecture.

The property also embodies high artistic values. Self-taught folk artist Reverend Roland Gordon created the church's most significant interior feature, a "collage-mural," entitled *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. Looking for a way to inspire the community's youth, Reverend Gordon pasted one image of his hero, Muhammad Ali, to the wall of the gymnasium in 1980. Over the past 35 years, his artwork has grown to cover the entire gymnasium, multiple rooms, stairways, hallways, and all three levels of the church. The collage-mural consists of newspaper and magazine clippings, posters, framed prints, painted murals, and other objects that depict prominent African Americans throughout history. What began as Reverend Gordon's simple mission to provide images of role models to the community's youth has resulted in an awe-inspiring Folk Artist Environment that greatly contributes to the body of American and African American Folk Art and serves as an extraordinary, unparalleled visual documentation of national and San-Francisco-specific African American history.

¹ McAlister, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: Knopf), 1984.

CHAPTER 1: INGLESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER



Exterior of Ingleside Presbyterian Church, April 2013. (Photo Credit: Planning Department)

Building Description

Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center is located at 1345 Ocean Avenue (Assessor's Block and Lot 6942/050) at the southeast corner of Ocean and Granada avenues in San Francisco's Ingleside neighborhood. The two-story-over-basement, 17,600 square foot concrete building occupies the majority of the 9,931 square foot lot.

The Neoclassical style building is sited and shaped according to its irregularly shaped lot. The front façade follows the diagonal orientation of Ocean Avenue and bows to a curving corner along the Granada Avenue elevation. The building's solid massing and classically inspired architecture contribute to its monumental presence within the commercial corridor. The two-story-over basement building features a symmetrically arranged façade with a tripartite design composed of a water table with a beltcourse to separate it from the main stories. The building is crowned by classical, dentiled entablature at the roofline. Though most of the roof is flat and unseen from the street, there is a visible low-height, octagonal dome at the southwest corner, above the church's sanctuary.



View of the primary façade along Ocean Avenue.

North Facade – Primary Elevation

The Ocean Avenue façade is the main entrance to the building. The symmetrical façade has an inset, two-story entry portico that is composed of two, centrally located Ionic columns, flanked by a pair of Ionic engaged columns, flanked by Ionic pilasters, all of which support a pediment. Each of the columns rests on a plain bases that extend from the sidewalk to the beltcourse. On the western (right-facing) engaged column's base is a cornerstone inscribed with the words, "Other Foundation Can No Man Lay Than That Which Is Laid, Which Is Jesus Christ I COR. III. XI." and "U.P. MAR. 1909." At the street level, an elevator entrance is located between the western pilaster and engaged column. A later addition to the building, the elevator doors slice through the beltcourse and most likely replace an original wood-sash window; remaining windows are visible behind metal grates. At the outer edges of the building, matching pilasters demarcate the corners. At both of the main levels, symmetrically arranged, vertically oriented punched fenestration is composed of wood-sash, double-hung windows with simple wood sills.



Detail of the staircase ascending from Ocean Avenue to one of three main entry doors. (Top Left); Detail of the cornerstone. (Bottom Left)

Detail of the terrazzo entry stairs. (Top Right); Detail of the elevator that is accessible from the sidewalk. (Bottom Right)

Within the entry portico, a terrazzo staircase with plain metal handrails ascends from Ocean Avenue to the building's three entrances. The landing is covered in a polychromatic mosaic that spells the word "Welcome." The three entrances consist of half-glazed, half-paneled, double-leaf wooden doors surmounted by an operable wood-sash transom. From a secondary, projecting cornice with a band of dentils, three globe light fixtures are suspended above each set of entry doors. At the portico's second story, there is a wood-sash, double-hung window centered above each pair of doors. The portico is topped with the pediment, which displays the word "Ingleside" in pin-mounted letters. The gable end of the pediment is capped with a small gold cross. Centered beneath "Ingleside" in the pediment, are the words "Presbyterian Church & Community Center," (also pin-mounted letters) located in the frieze of the building's entablature.

The primary façade bows at the northwest corner towards the west façade. Pairs of wood-sash, double-hung windows, like on the primary façade, are located at each story on the curved corner. Pin-mounted letters that spell “Presbyterian Church & Community Center” are repeated within the entablature’s frieze. A wooden cross is centrally mounted between the composition of windows.



View of the building's curved northwest corner.



Detail of the wooden cross.

West Façade–Secondary Elevation

Starting from the right-most pilaster of the bowed corner bay, the west façade is divided into 6 semi-equal bays by simple pilasters with no capital. The base rises to the level of the beltcourse where, like the primary elevation, the shaft extends across the two stories of the church to the entablature. In the first bay of the entablature’s frieze, are the words “We Walk by Faith, Not By Sight. II COR. 5:7” made, again, of mounted pin letters. The bay contains two double-hung wood-sash windows at the first and second stories. The second bay contains a small pair of double-hung, wood-sash windows at the second story, and double-leaf, wood paneled doors at the first story, which serve as the sanctuary’s egress doors. The center bay contains a group of 6 stained glass windows, with three at each story. The first story windows are square and comprised of 12 equally sized pieces of glass in various colors (in red, blue, green, and yellow) that surround a larger central square of colored glass. The second floor features the same style of windows; only they are rectangular and comprised of 14 pieces of colored glass surrounding one larger piece of glass. The windows are framed together by a continuous lentil, pilasters, and sill. The fourth bay mirrors the second bay, with a small pair of double hung windows and egress doors below. And the fifth bay mirrors the first bay with its configuration of two pairs of windows.



View of the west façade. (Top Left); Detail of the colored glass windows at the Sanctuary (Top Right); Detail of the lettering at the entablature (Bottom Left); Egress doors from the Sanctuary (Bottom Right).

South Façade–Side Elevation

Most of the south façade abuts the adjacent building, except the lightwell and a rear yard space. A set of colored glass windows, like those on the secondary elevation, look from the sanctuary onto the lightwell.

East Façade–Rear Elevation

The rear, alley-facing elevation is more utilitarian in style and is only accessible from the gym's egress doors and through a metal security gate on Granada Avenue. The main body of the elevation is finished in stucco, and has two second-story wood-sash double-hung windows separated by exposed mechanical ducts. A small projection, covered in wood shiplap siding, displays a small wood-sash, double-hung window.

General Features of the Interior

The church's entry lobby is accessed through the portico of the primary elevation on Ocean Avenue. Many walls in the church are clad with a four-and-a-half foot tall, stained board and batten wainscoting with plaster or drywall above. Typically, the plaster or drywall above the wainscoting has been covered with *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* collage-mural. The doors are cased with wood trim and entablatures. Typically, the historic wood throughout the church displays, what appears to be, the historic dark-reddish-brown finish. At some places, non-historic faux wood paneling is installed, and in others, the paneling has been painted.

Throughout most of the church, the floor is covered in non-historic maroon carpeting. One hallway, leading to the gymnasium has non-historic tile flooring, while the gym appears to have its original wood floors. The basement level has vinyl composition flooring and lacks the wainscoting, door surrounds, and picture rail found on the floors above. Aside from the lobby's brass chandelier, florescent tube light fixtures light most of the rest of the church.



Entrance Lobby, April 2013. (Photo Credit: San Francisco Planning Department)

Sanctuary

The sanctuary is accessible from the lobby through centered double-leaf, wood paneled doors mirrored on either side by roll-up style wooden "garage doors" and a second set of double-leafed, wood paneled doors. All of the doors and casings have the same historic dark stain.

Overall, the interior of the sanctuary is rectangular in form with a raised dais at the front, curving second-story balcony at the back, and an octagonal dome spanning the ceiling. The floor plan is symmetrically composed with a center aisle, flanked by two sets of seven curving wooden pews – each set separated by a small aisle. The floor slopes downward to the dais where the pulpit, communion table, and two sets of pews are located. A red velvet curtain with a wooden cross serves as a backdrop. The sloped floor, curved orientation of the pews, and balcony level seating ensure that each person has an accessible view of the pulpit, similar to the layout of a concert hall.

The rest of the Sanctuary dome features a new pallet of materials, as it was remodeled and "modernized" in the 1950s. The octagonal dome is comprised of multi-colored glass skylights and redwood surrounds and supports. Large knee brackets run from the center of the dome, down the octagon's corners, and meet the wall at the balcony level to provide support. The balcony houses five rows of three pews and is faced in vertically laid board and batten panels, matching the dome. On either side of the room, are two sets of 6 geometrically patterned, colored glass windows – one side looks onto the lightwell and the other onto Granada Avenue.



View toward the pulpit from the entry doors.



View from the pulpit toward the entry doors with balcony above.



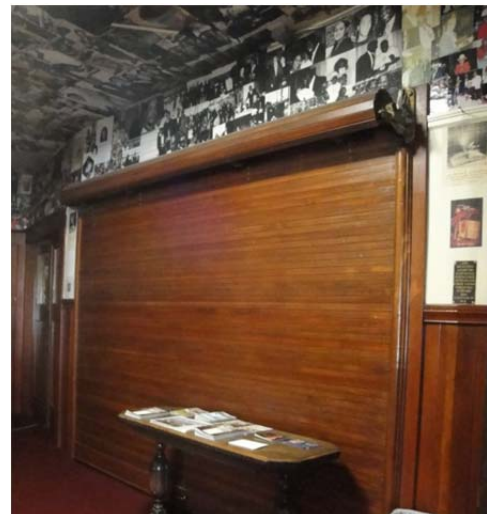
View of the sanctuary's balcony.



Detail of a knee bracket at the balcony.



Detail of the dome's skylights.



Detail of a wood roll-up door, as seen from the lobby side that provides access to the sanctuary.

Architectural Influences

Neoclassical style architecture became the dominant style for domestic, civic and institutional buildings across the country between 1895 and 1955. It was directly inspired by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where the era's most notable architects designed classically inspired buildings to house the fair's many exhibits. The Beaux Arts style originated at Paris' legendary design school, *L'Ecole des Beaux Arts*, as a French combination of Greek and Roman architectural vocabularies that focused on symmetry and monumentality. The proliferation of Beaux Arts civic and institutional designs after the World's Fair led Neoclassicism to become a versatile version classicism that could be scaled down to suite small-scale projects such as banks, residences, and churches.

Architect/Developer Joseph Leonard

By 1920, when Leonard was selected for the job, he was already a very well-known architect and developer, particularly in the Ingleside neighborhood. A little more than a decade before, Leonard had designed houses in Jordan Park, in the Inner Richmond neighborhood. The project was a short-lived partnership with James Jordan and was Leonard's first foray into San Francisco developments. Jordan Park has been touted for its large lots, and idyllic Mediterranean Revival and Neoclassical styles with Arts and Crafts influences. Leonard left the project to undertake his own nearby residential development, Richmond Heights. There, Leonard drew "the most drastic restrictions" around his two-block development to ensure that the homeowners knew their homes would always be in a residential neighborhood.²

His most well-known development, Ingleside Terraces, was in the church's backyard. When the refugee camp was dismantled from the site of the former Ingleside Racetrack in 1910, Leonard, through his Urban Realty Improvement Company, purchased the site and constructed a new private "Residence Park" called Ingleside Terraces. Characterized by "entrance gates to separate it from the existing urban fabric, curvilinear streets, elaborate



1913 View of Ingleside Terraces along Victoria Street. (Photo Credit: California Historical Society, North Baker Research Library, Ephemera Collection)

² "The Story of Joseph Leonard, Homebuilder." *The San Francisco Call*, February 23, 1913.

landscaping, and large irregular shaped lots," Ingleside Terraces became one of the city's most exclusive residential neighborhoods. A newspaper said, "Ingleside Terraces was destined, because of the magic Leonard touch, to be the most desirable residence neighborhood west of Chicago."³ Its curving streets contrasted with Leonard's previous developments that had strictly adhered to the orthogonal street grid. Leonard was the first developer to bring the concept of the residence park to San Francisco and with it he not only ushered in a new era of urban design in the city, but he introduced restrictive residential covenants. These were legally binding obligations written into the deed of a property that included mandating single-family residency, side yard clearances, street setbacks and even racial restrictions that prohibited non-whites from living or owning a property.⁴

Leonard and his family lived at 90 Cedro Avenue⁵ in Ingleside Terraces.⁶ As he was beginning the project, he appealed to the United Railroads to run a new line to Ingleside and assured them that his new residence park would be desirable and would generate continual income for the railroad. Well aware that adequate transportation was essential to the development's success he advocated for the Twin Peaks Tunnel and, with other developers, established a special assessment district to finance the tunnel project, although his was the farthest of any neighborhood from the new streetcar line.⁷ Hugely successful, Leonard homes were sold as "a well ordered private park, a place of beautiful dwellings on ample grounds, free from the dangers of crowded streets, with plenty of room for the little ones to romp and play."⁸

Born near Dallas, Texas, in 1850, Leonard studied mechanical engineering in New York and later architecture in Philadelphia, before moving to the Bay Area. Initially, he concentrated his efforts in Alameda where he constructed the "Leonardville" neighborhood. A newspaper article wrote that under the Leonard touch, with the Leonard genius to shape things, artistic little homes, bungalows, mission styles, and Gothic palacettes began to dot the Alameda map."⁹ And when he had built 365 homes in Alameda, he moved to Berkeley, where he "built a house on almost every lot he could find and peopled it with San Francisco families" before abandoning the industry for the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush. Upon his return, he briefly worked for the Suburban Homebuilding Society, where in 1906 he and his colleagues were one of five firms to build the first "earthquake shacks."

From 1905 to 1908, one of his most prominent architectural commissions was the Vedanta Society Temple (extant, 2963 Webster Street) an Edwardian-era temple in an Exotic Eclectic combination with Indian/Mogul-influenced arcading and elaborate ogee-arched windows. The first two stories were constructed in 1905 and the exuberant third story in 1908 – just before Leonard began Ingleside Terraces.¹⁰ His work across the Richmond and in Ingleside made him a household name. By the time the Twin Peaks Tunnel opened in 1918, Ingleside Terraces was fully established and Leonard had become a very wealthy man. He retired shortly after in 1920 and died in his second home in Ingleside Terraces, 344 Moncada Way, in 1929.¹¹

³ "The Story of Joseph Leonard, Homebuilder."

⁴ Racial covenants were found to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1949 (*Shelley v. Kraemer*, 1949). Restrictive covenants were found to be unconstitutional by the California General Assembly's passing of the Rumford Fair Housing bill in 1963; they were reinstated in 1964, when the bill was overturned. It wasn't until 1968, through the Federal Fair Housing Act, that the practice became illegal.

⁶ Kelly.

⁷ "The Story of Joseph Leonard, Homebuilder."

⁸ "The Story of Joseph Leonard, Homebuilder."

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kelly.

¹¹ "Joseph A. Leonard." Western Neighborhoods Project. Accessed January 4, 2016. <http://www.outsidelands.org/leonard.php>

Leonard's diverse portfolio and influences within the realms of architecture, engineering, and city planning can be seen across the city. His Ingleside Terraces, complete with racial covenants, were used as a model for other elite residential parks in the city for decades. His engineering experience provided the infrastructure improvements needed for the city to expand West of Twin Peaks, and his ecclesiastical architecture responded to the unique needs of his clients. He was a skilled architect, but a more acute businessman, who took advantage of development opportunities and designed contemporary residences to attract buyers.

History of the Ingleside Neighborhood

Development of the Ingleside neighborhood can be traced back to the mid-19th century when this area of the city was part of Rancho San Miguel, a Mexican land grant that was awarded to Jose de Jesus Noé in 1845. The land was primarily used for farming and agriculture, but other uses included bars, restaurants, roadhouses, and illegal gambling establishments. The area's isolation from the city center enabled such businesses to thrive.¹² One path served as the main access point to the area:¹³

All [roadhouses, gambling venues, restaurants, bars] were reached via a path running west from the San Jose Road, through the valley between Mount Davidson and Merced Heights, to Lake Merced. This 'Lake House Road' or 'Ocean House Road' was mentioned in newspapers as early as 1853, and accommodated coach-lines by 1854.¹⁴

The "Lake House Road" or "Ocean House Road" eventually became known as "Ocean Avenue," which, today, is the area's primary commercial corridor and thoroughfare through the Ingleside neighborhood. The area underwent a major period of development when the County of San Francisco established the Industrial School (1859); and the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad Company built a new single-track railroad line through the area to connect San Francisco with San Jose (1864), which later became a line of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company (1868); and then the County built a juvenile detention facility and House of Correction (1876). With the changing infrastructure, Ingleside's population transitioned from primarily farm workers to railroad workers, corrections officers, saloonkeepers, and operators of illegal gambling businesses – all of whom comprised a new economy.¹⁵

Land developer Adolph Sutro purchased a section of the rancho in 1881 to build a new residential development he dubbed, "Lakeview." The neighborhood more popularly became known as "Ingleside" after the Ingleside Inn, a



Vedanta Society Temple located at 2963 Webster Street. (Photo Credit: Collection of the Meridian International Center, Kindred Nations Gallery)

¹² Brandi, Richard and Woody LaBounty. *San Francisco's Merced Heights, and Ingleside (OMI) Neighborhoods, 1862-1959*, prepared for the San Francisco Historic Preservation Fund Committee (San Francisco Planning Department: 2010), 22.

¹³ TBA West, *Balboa Park Area Plan and Historic Resource Survey: Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department (San Francisco: 2008), 12.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Brandi and LaBounty, 11-12.

popular stop on the route to the Cliff House. Today, much of Ingleside's street grid, including many street names, is derived from Sutro's Lakeview.¹⁶ More changes came when the Pacific Jockey Club opened the Ingleside Racetrack in 1895. With an established concentration of gambling places in the area, Ingleside was ideal for the club's new racetrack and it soon became the region's top destination for horseracing. Two rail lines were constructed in 1895; the first by the Southern Pacific Railroad and the second the Market Street Railway, which ran along Ocean Avenue as the western extension of the Mission Street Line to accommodate growth in the area. The following year, in 1896, Ingleside Coursing Park, a dog-racing facility opened, which further cemented Ingleside as a gambling destination. The number of restaurants, bars, saloons, and roadhouses in the neighborhood increased as well. With the many new job opportunities and easy access to transportation, came an increase in residential development.¹⁷



Ingleside Racetrack in the 1890s. (Photo Credit: Western Neighborhoods Project)

The following year, San Francisco was struck by the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and, as a result, hundreds of thousands of people were suddenly displaced and without shelter. Thomas Williams, owner of the Ingleside Racetrack offered the recently closed track as a refugee camp for earthquake and fire victims, a purpose it served for approximately 15 months.

¹⁶ TBA West, 12-13.

¹⁷ Brandi and LaBounty, 23-24.

Founding of the Church

During this time, the area's new refugees prompted the founding of Ingleside United Presbyterian Church by Reverend W.E. Dugan of the Second United Presbyterian Church in the Mission District. In 1907, he and missionary Laura Sawhill established the Ingleside Sabbath School to provide spiritual and educational needs to the growing community. The Sabbath School convened in the basement of a nearby apartment building, Robinson Apartments,¹⁸ where Reverend Dugan gave Sunday sermons until 1908—when the United Presbyterian Board announced the purchase of the property at 1345 Ocean Avenue for a permanent church. After Dugan's death, a new pastor, Reverend D.A. Russell, led the construction of the new church from 1909 to 1910.¹⁹ Due to a debilitating illness, he was never able to lead the church, so Reverend W.E. Gordon stepped in as the first pastor.²⁰

Now fully operational, the church provided critical assistance to the re-settled refugees. The church's next pastor, Reverend W.R. McKnight, focused a significant amount of energy and resources on expanding the church's outreach to local youth. He added a gymnasium to the building in 1914 to provide a safe space youth to recreate, away from the dangers and temptations of Ocean Avenue's bars and roadhouses.²¹ In September 1920, the church was destroyed in a massive fire and the congregation was forced to rebuild.

Under the direction of Reverend McKnight, and with assistance from the United Presbyterian Mission (the equivalent of a diocese), church leaders envisioned a "radically different church building."²² The following passage describes the rebuilding process:²³

The new church building would house 9 protestant congregations, and would also include a "community service center." The United Presbyterian Mission and Church Building Board offered \$25,000 provided that the community would provide a similar amount. Ingleside Presbyterian along with the eight other congregations raised the money and met the challenge. Much of the money came from donations from the community who were in great need of the community service center. The new building was to be built by renowned "Arts and Crafts" architect, Joseph Leonard...²⁴

Construction History

In 1920, the congregation selected architect/developer Joseph A. Leonard to design the new building. When it was completed in 1923, the church was called the "Ingleside Community Church and Social Service Center." It was built at a cost of \$65,000, through the cooperation of nine Protestant congregations, including Ingleside United Presbyterian Church.²⁵ The San Francisco Examiner described the new building in 1923:

The new house of worship is "different" among churches—for it does not alone aim to perform service for the soul of its worshippers. Those who build[ed] [sic] it sought as well the physical imperfection of its members of numerous denominations to this end the imposing structure houses variously a gymnasium with locker, showers and dressing rooms, a ladies club room and rest room and a gathering room for boys...When there came an occasion – thru the lack of funds – that Rev. A.E. Kelly the religious director, had to choose between

¹⁸ "The History of Ingleside Presbyterian Church," Ingleside Presbyterian Church, accessed August 12, 2013. <http://inglesidepresbyterian.org/History.php>.

¹⁹ "Ground Broken for Presbyterian Church." *San Francisco Call*, January 1909.

²⁰ "The History of Ingleside Presbyterian Church."

²¹ "The History of Ingleside Presbyterian Church."

²² "The History of Ingleside Presbyterian," *The Ingleside Insider*, Vol. 3. Issue 2 (June 24, 2007), 8. (Church newsletter)

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

gymnasium or a pipe organ for the hall of worship, he yielded to the little fellows who will someday be big men, and they got their parallel bars, Indian clubs, dumbbells and rings. That's why there is no pipe organ.²⁶

Ingleside Presbyterian Church after Construction

In the years after construction, Ingleside Community Church and Social Service Center focused heavily on youth development, particularly after Reverend R.H. Gordon became pastor in 1926. He immediately formed new after-school clubs, which "filled the church with children during the afternoons and evenings."³⁸ During the first several years in the new building, the church congregation was continually growing, but the revival was short-lived. The Great Depression of the 1930s took a toll, as did the construction of new transportation routes that connected Ingleside residents to their old neighborhoods and old churches. Use of the building continued to wane over the ensuing decade, as many of the other congregations gradually moved out into their own church buildings.³⁹ From 1935 to 1937, during Reverend John Alvin Campbell's tenure, several attempts were made for Ingleside United Presbyterian to do the same. Through the end of the 1930s, the congregation relied heavily on the financial support of the United Presbyterian Mission and its sister church in the Mission District to maintain operations.⁴⁰

Shifting Demographics in the Neighborhood

While residential development in Ingleside slowed drastically during the Great Depression, as it did across the country, the neighborhood began to recover in the 1940s and was almost completely built out by 1950.⁴¹ African Americans had begun moving into the neighborhood in significant numbers during the 1940s, and by the 1970s, Ingleside had become San Francisco's first Black middle-class neighborhood—something "San Francisco did not have ... until World War II."⁴²

In the 19th century, African Americans lived throughout the city, but the most thriving neighborhood was located just north of today's Chinatown. When the area was destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, and many residents relocated to the Western Addition. The city's Black population began to grow during the war years, as San Francisco became a hub of wartime shipbuilding and attracted thousands seeking new jobs. Federal agencies and private employers recruited workers from across the country and San Francisco gained tens of thousands of new residents as a result. Between 1941 and 1945, roughly 27,000 African Americans moved to San Francisco.⁴³ Two large African American neighborhoods emerged – the Fillmore in Western Addition and Bayview-Hunters Point, near the shipyards.⁴⁴

Significant numbers of African American professionals such as doctors, dentists, and attorneys, moved San Francisco during and immediately following the war years. Unfortunately, they could find few options for purchasing their own home.⁴⁵ Ingleside and the adjacent neighborhoods of Merced Heights and Ocean View generally did not have racial covenants, aside from the residence parks, like Ingleside Terraces. Houses in those areas were generally

²⁶ "9 Religions use 1 New Church for Worship," *SF Examiner*, 1923.

³⁸ "Our History," Ingleside Presbyterian Church, accessed May 13, 2015. <http://inglesidepresbyterian.org/OurPastor.php>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Brandi and LaBounty, 37.

⁴² Kelly, VerPlank, and the San Francisco Planning Department. [Draft] *African American Historic Context Statement* (Unpublished: 2015), 66.

⁴³ Kelly, VerPlank, and the San Francisco Planning Department. 84.

⁴⁴ Kelly, VerPlank, and the San Francisco Planning Department. 90-91.

⁴⁵ Kelly, VerPlank, and the San Francisco Planning Department. 96.

affordable and thus, it became known as one of the few places where middle-class Black families could buy homes.⁴⁶ Most others areas of the city remained off-limits to African Americans.⁴⁷

In 1950, African Americans comprised only five percent of the census tracts in the Ocean View, Merced Heights and Ingleside neighborhoods; by 1970 the population had grown to 62 percent.⁴⁸ Brian Godfrey documented the shift in *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Makings of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (1988):

Apparently aided by block-busting realtors, several parts of the Ingleside began to experience an influx of middle-income blacks in the 1940s, beginning in the southerly-neighborhood and spreading northwest into Merced Heights. The Ingleside District (not to be confused with the more exclusive Ingleside Terraces neighborhood, directly to the north) soon became San Francisco's middle-class black district, as opposed to the lower-income Fillmore and Hunters Point areas.⁴⁹

African Americans eventually were able move into the private residence park of Ingleside Terraces, but not without resistance from neighbors. In the most infamous instance, Cecil F. Poole, who had recently been hired to serve as the head of the Superior Court Trial Division of the District Attorney's office, attempted to purchase a home in Ingleside Terraces in 1958. After local real estate agents refused to help him, he and his wife worked directly with the property owner to arrange the purchase.⁵⁰ Poole and his family were the first Blacks to move into the private residence park, paving the way for its eventual integration. Their move was not without incident, and shortly after moving in, the family were victims of a cross burning in their front yard. The house, 90 Cedro Avenue, is a San Francisco Landmark for its association with Cecil F. Poole as well as the building's architect, who, of course, is Joseph A. Leonard—the man responsible for creating Ingleside Terraces' racial covenants.⁵¹

The early 1960s witnessed the passage—and overturning—of several fair housing laws that had significant impacts on Black settlement patterns in San Francisco and the Bay Area. In 1963, the California State Legislature passed the Rumford Fair Housing bill, which prohibited discrimination during the sale, or rental, of housing based on race, among other factors. In 1964, voters overturned the bill. It wasn't until passage of the Federal Fair Housing Act, in 1968, that race-based housing discrimination became illegal and was actively combated across the country. Even afterwards, though, many realtors and private property owners continued to discriminate against African Americans.⁵²

The African American population continued to grow during the 1960s and 1970s, with most new residents arriving from the South.⁵³ By 1970, Ingleside was a majority African American neighborhood, when the population peaked at 78.2 percent.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ Brandi and LaBounty, 40.

⁴⁷ Kelly, VerPlank, and the San Francisco Planning Department, 66-67.

⁴⁸ Brandi and LaBounty, 40.

⁴⁹ Brian Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Makings of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1988), 101.

⁵⁰ "Streetwise: The Burned Cross," Western Neighborhoods Project, accessed May 12, 2015. <http://outsidelands.org/sw25.php>

⁵¹ Kelly.

⁵² Kelly, VerPlank, and the San Francisco Planning Department, 97.

⁵³ Kelly, VerPlank, and the San Francisco Planning Department, 129-131.

⁵⁴ Kelly, VerPlank, and the San Francisco Planning Department, 127.

The Church Congregation Post-War

Ingleside United Presbyterian Church's membership increased in the years following World War II and the church was finally able to become self-supporting after years of financial dependence. From 1953 to 1957, under Reverend Dwight A. White, the sanctuary and gym were remodeled and a new Pastor's study was constructed.⁵⁵

With African Americans becoming a large percentage of the neighborhood, Ingleside United Presbyterian Church attempted to become a multi-racial congregation and reached out to the neighborhood's Black residents. Reverend Albert Damon (pastor, 1958-1964) heavily emphasized

inviting nearby residents into the church. According to longtime church member,

Donald J. Mattade, Reverend Damon visited his home to invite him and his family to attend church services. Mattade, who is white, was married to an African American woman, and with their children they decided to attend services after the reverend's visit.⁵⁶



Ingleside Presbyterian Sunday School Class, 1966. (Photo Credit: "The History of Ingleside Presbyterian Church")

In addition to the Mattades, the congregation welcomed many, new African American and interracial families during that time.⁵⁹ In 1972, the church decided to hire its first African American pastor, Reverend Alvin Mills, who joined Reverend Washburn (1962-1974) as co-pastor.⁶⁰ The partnership was not without its challenges, and their disagreements eventually led to Reverend Washburn's departure. From that, the congregation became more divided than ever and membership dwindled as white families began leaving the neighborhood to move to the suburbs, while newly settled Black families continued to attend church services in their old neighborhoods.⁶¹ By 1976, the church had only ten members. Interim and temporary pastors were hired to preach on Sundays but by 1978, the church had only four members. Threatened with closure, the church's solution was to hire first-year seminary student Roland Gordon to preach on Sundays for a cost of \$50 per week.⁶²

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Donald J. Mattade, oral history interview, October 23, 2014.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

Reverend Roland Gordon

Service to God is service to humanity. It does not matter what a person's background is or what religion or status they are, love is the common ground. If people are genuinely motivated by good and love, then no matter what the barrier we can talk the same language.⁶³

— Reverend Roland Gordon

When Roland Gordon joined the church in August 1978, he was still a student at the San Francisco Theological Seminary. In a 2003 interview with the Western Neighborhoods Project, he said,

The church had died off to four members, the property was the eyesore of the community, the community called it the 'pink elephant.'⁶⁴ Our presbytery pretty much had given up on the Presbyterian witness here at this site... I saw a bigger picture that the Higher Power was calling me [here]. I liked the community. I saw the potential of the building, although it was outdated. The bathroom was so dilapidated; the women wouldn't even go downstairs to use it.

Upon completion of his master's degree, Gordon was ordained as the church's full-time pastor on July 31, 1983.⁶⁵ The new reverend worked hard to recruit new members, and to keep operations going, and from that he quickly ushered in a new era that energized and strengthened the church. Throughout his tenure, Reverend Gordon has made outreach, particularly to African American boys, his priority. When he first saw his new church, its gymnasium was one of the biggest attractions, as he saw its potential for youth engagement.⁶⁶ He recalled;

Well, when I saw the indoor gymnasium ...I knew. There was no doubt in my mind that the spirit had called me here, because, I mean, growing up, I still love basketball, but I was about thirty-four years old then. [I knew from playing the game myself, that basketball can teach kids to] transfer those things you learn on the court – team ball and team play and all that stuff – carry over to life, that that could be a tool for training children.⁶⁷ Basically the way I got the word out here was I pretty much opened the doors... the children came to me. This is part of my strategy. Predominately black, but all races would come and play.

What I would do was, use that as a teaching method to instill principles, self-discipline and teamwork, and the importance of education. I would always pull them all aside, and we would pray before we'd begin any games. I mean, like on one day there'd be maybe five games played, let's just say, so before everything started, we would pray. I would require that the kids would have to come to worship service at least once, I don't know how many times, out of the season. When the season was over, everybody got trophies. I had a banquet, so all the families came, all races. We brought them together and everybody got trophies. So the word got out. So I think it was more of that strategy of the word spreading about there's a young minister here who cared about all the people and the children, and that the people spread the word about the ministry here.⁶⁸

⁶³ Mullaney, Alexander. "Walking with Reverend Roland Gordon." *The Ingleside-Excelsior Light*, January 7, 2015.

⁶⁴ When Reverend Gordon first saw the church, it was painted pink on the inside and outside..

⁶⁵ "Our Pastor," Ingleside Presbyterian Church, accessed May 13, 2015, <http://inglesidepresbyterian.org/OurPastor.php>.

⁶⁶ Harper, Nile, *Urban Churches, Vital Signs: Beyond Charity toward Justice* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 264.

⁶⁷ LaBounty, Woody. "Interview with Reverend Gordon. Western Neighborhoods Project. May 21, 2003. Accessed via <http://www.outsidelands.org/gordon-interview.php>

⁶⁸ Ibid.



Reverend Gordon and a church member stand in front of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. (Image Credit: Raymond Rudolph, *The Ingleside Light*)

Not limited to the walls of his church, Reverend Gordon has served as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization; his efforts were documented in Frederick Nile Harper's *Urban Churches, Vital Signs: Beyond Charity toward Justice* (1999), a book of urban church success stories. Harper points out seven initiatives that he believes were key to the church's renaissance. Three of those include: the founding of the Ingleside Youth Basketball League; reviving the existing Ingleside Senior Center (established 1964), which provided seniors with hot lunches; and the founding of the Ingleside Community Center in 1986 as a 501(c)3 non-profit arm of the church that raised funds for a "variety of education, advocacy, and employment programs for youth and young adults."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Harper, 266.

CHAPTER 2: THE GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES

“My charge is to help our children
–especially at-risk youth–
Become responsible citizens.
Working together
–government schools, the arts, sports–
All of us can help our young people reach their potential.
The Great Cloud of Witnesses is about ROLE MODELS.
Our children need mentors... and role models.
They need our support.
Their future is the world’s future.”

- Reverend Roland Gordon⁸¹



Reverend Gordon in the Entrance Lobby. (Photo Credit: Raymond Rudolph, The Ingleside Light)

The Great Cloud of Witnesses collage-mural is Ingleside Presbyterian Church’s most significant interior feature. It consists of thousands of newspaper and magazine clippings, posters, framed prints, painted murals, and other objects that tell the stories of inspirational African Americans. It spans across the entire church, encompassing

⁸¹ Ingleside Presbyterian Church. *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* (City and County of San Francisco, n.d.)

portions of the lobby, basement-level rooms, second floor offices, and the entire gymnasium. It contains portions that are dedicated to the history of the church, church pastors, and church family; prominent African Americans in San Francisco, and rooms dedicated to individuals such as Mayor Willie Brown and Michael Jackson; and compilations of images dedicated nationally-known athletes, such as the gymnasium full of African American sports ephemera. The wide variety of rousing images is intended to inspire a wide array of interests – an inspirational figure to appeal to one's particular interest. Too long to catalogue, the list of individuals includes scientists (such as George Washington Carver), politicians and civil rights leaders (such as Thurgood Marshall and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.), entertainers and performers (such as Billie Holiday and Whitney Houston), authors and poets (such as Langston Hughes), and athletes (such as Wilma Rudolph and Jackie Robinson).

Defining Folk Art and Folk Art Environments

To art historians, Reverend Gordon's *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* would be considered "self-taught folk art" that conveys the history and legacy of African Americans through murals and collage techniques. Art of this type has been labeled as many things throughout the last one-hundred years, including *self-taught*, *primitive*, *naïve*, and *folk*, to *isolated*, *visionary*, *intuitive*, *art brut*, *outsider*, and *vernacular*. All of these terms are intended to convey the same idea; for this discussion, the term "Folk Art" will be used. Folk Art can be defined as the art of the everyday, it is often rooted in community and cultural traditions, and it expresses cultural identity and shared community values using a range of utilitarian objects and decorative media. It is made by individuals who use their creative skills to convey a message, most often the artist's interpretation of his or her community's authentic cultural identity.⁸²

American Folk Art was first defined as a field of art history during the early 1900s when artists, critics, and curators were searching for an authentic style of American art. Folk Art presented a distinctive picture of "national identity, faith, progress, ingenuity, community, and individuality." Initially, the term referred to work that was created in the past, by rural, vernacular, or uneducated artists; overtime, it has expanded to include the present day. For the last twenty years, the term "self-taught" has more regularly been used to address those "artists whose inspiration emerges from unsuspected paths and unconventional places giving voice to individuals who may be situated outside the social mainstream."

John Beardsley, in *Gardens of Revelation* (1995), traces the recognition and reception of "outsider art" as "art" by the American art world to a series of publications and exhibitions of the late 1960s and the 1970s. Beardsley's survey and interpretation focuses on outsider art environments in an international context. He characterizes these sites as handmade environments that express a personal, moral, or religious vision typically fabricated of found material by people who aren't necessarily identified by themselves or by others as artists. "These environments... often have an obsessive character and are the result of many years of work... Part architecture, part sculpture, part landscape, visionary environments seem insistently and purposefully to defy the usual categories of artistic practice."⁸³

Often folk artists are labeled as eccentric outsiders, obsessive visionaries, or something similar, when their artwork begins to encompass, and even become, the world around them. Art historians refer to these manifested "worlds" as Folk Art, Visionary, or Outsider Environments. As Reverend Gordon is a pillar of his community, his work cannot be described as outsider, so this discussion will refer to *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* as a "Folk Art Environment."

⁸² "What is Folk Art?" The International Folk Art Museum, accessed August 30, 2014.
<http://www.internationalfolkart.org/about/whatisfolkart.html>

⁸³ Beardsley, John. *Gardens of Revelation*. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1995), 7.

A number of Folk Art Environments in California, including Watts Tower, *Nitt Witt Ridge*, and *Salvation Mountain*, are recognized at the local, state, and federal levels for their high artistic and traditional cultural values. Across the country, many are run and maintained by non-profit art organizations, such as *The Orange Show Monument* in Houston, Texas; *Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village* in Simi Valley, California; and the *Taya Doro Mitchell Home*, in Berkeley, California in order to promote the works and to support their continued operation and ongoing maintenance. Similarities with these recognized environments are evident in *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. (See Appendix A: Case Studies of Designated Folk Artist Environments and Murals) Like other the Folk Artists, Reverend Gordon uses his art to convey an idea, for him it is his spirituality and inspirational role models, for others it is an opportunity to highlight their found treasures. And, like most other examples of Folk Art and Folk Art Environments, Reverend Gordon has chosen to communicate a story three-dimensionally, through a monumentally scaled artwork comprised of found objects, obsessively assembled over the course of many years, and sometimes decades. *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* is unique among Folk Artists Environments in that Reverend Gordon uses the relatively uncommon medium of paper clippings combined with painted murals, objects, and signs on the interior of his church – a technique he refers to as “collage-mural.”⁸⁴

Author Jon Beardsley's description of another artist's environment, Jeff McKissack's the *Orange Show*, seems to apply to Reverend Gordon and *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* perfectly; “[He] did not identify himself as an artist and had obsessive tendencies; the show took many years to construct; and it is part architecture, part landscape and is difficult to categorize using traditional artistic methods of expression.” Beardsley goes on to compare aspects of the *Orange Show* to Howard Finster's *Paradise Garden*; and Herman Rusch's *Prairie Moon Museum and Garden* (1960s-70s) in Cochrane, Wisconsin; Harry Andrews's *Chateau La Roche* in Loveland, Ohio (begun 1929, 1955-81); and Edward Leedskalnin's *Rock Castle Park/Coral Castle* in Homestead, Florida (1936-51). Speaking collectively of these environments, he says;

These are all profoundly symbolic spaces in which their creators sought refuge from the world, creating a safe place in which to articulate idiosyncratic variations on political or moral philosophy, notions of wholesome living, or ideas about love.

The Great Cloud of Witnesses' combination of unique artistic techniques; monumental size, including expansion into multiple rooms and various locations; and the usage of constructed themes and religious overtones fit well within this definition. *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* is rare among artist environments in that it is also located within a building identified for its significant as the work of a master architect, Joseph A. Leonard. *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* is an expansive and easily legible story in mural form; that as an alteration to the historic church, has gained significance in its own right.

Examining African American Muralism

African American Muralism must be addressed in order understand the artistic merit of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. Early African American muralists used murals to tell a personal, first-hand version of Black history and the Black experience in a manner that anyone could understand, even those who could not read. Reverend Gordon chose the technique knowing that his population of young boys *could*, but would not read Black history. Though his artistic technique and choice of media differs from that of the traditional painted murals described below, his ambitions, inspirations, and cultural focus are in keeping with the spirit of 20th century African American muralism. Author Floyd Coleman writes:

⁸⁴ Beardsley, 7.

The mural serves as a means of publicly communicating ideals, values, hopes, and aspirations of a people. For Blacks in particular, the mural has been a symbol of pride, dignity, endurance, and hope. It has served as an alternative vision of history as well as a major medium of social criticism and protest.⁸⁵

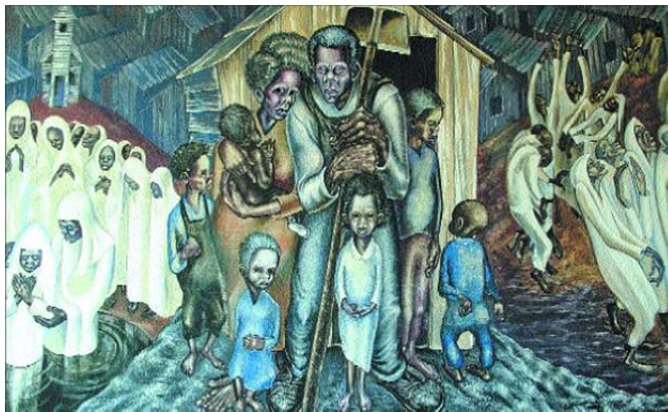
Notable muralists include Hale Woodruff (1900-1980), well known for his triptych *Amistad Murals* (1938), located in Talladega College in Alabama, and Charles White (1918-1979), best-known for his mural, *The Contribution of the Negro to Democracy in America* (1943) at Hampton University in Virginia, where he presented “historical personalities in heroic action.”⁸⁶ John Biggers (1924-2001), used murals to disseminate the stories, feats, and accomplishments of ordinary Black people.



Amistad Murals, Mural No. I, The Revolt; Hale Woodruff, 1938. (Photo Credit: Talladega University)



The Contribution of the Negro to Democracy in America; Charles White, 1943. (Photo Credit: Hampton University)



The Sharecroppers, John Biggers, 1947. (Photo Credit: Pennsylvania State University)



The Wall of Respect; William Walker, et al. 1967. (Photo Credit, Getty Images)

A critical point in the field occurred in 1967, when William Walker, an art school graduate, used a community-based method to create the *Wall of Respect* with muralists Jeff Donaldson, Wadsworth Jarrell, Barbara Jones, Carolyn Lawrence, Norman Parish, Eliot Hunter, and others. Painted on the wall of a building at a highly visible intersection in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood, the *Wall of Respect* was one of the first Black murals to be painted in the public realm. Many of its precedents, as seen in the above examples, had been located primarily on interior walls of Black institutional spaces.⁸⁷ *Wall of Respect* became a particularly pivotal work that impacted the African American mural

⁸⁵ Coleman, Floyd, “Keeping Hope Alive: The Story of African American Murals,” in *Walls of Heritage, Walls of Pride: African American Murals*, Robin J. Dunitz and James Prigoff (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 2000), 10.

⁸⁶ Dunitz, Robin J. and James Prigoff, *Walls of Heritage, Walls of Pride: African American Murals*, (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 2000), 7.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

movement and spurred “people’s art” projects across the country. On the subject of urban murals, author Michael Harris writes:

Urban murals were, and continue to be, vehicles for empowerment for African Americans. They signify a resistance to victimization and a refusal to act the part. They articulate hope, celebrate history and achievement, and show off the creativity of artists. They teach, inspire, affirm, critique, document and sometimes just plain strut their colorful stuff. Many of them emblemize the conditions and potential of African Americans.⁸⁸

Inspiration for *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*

The Cloud of Witnesses began very modestly when, as student pastor, in 1980, a young Roland Gordon glued a single newspaper clipping of his hero, Muhammad Ali, to the gymnasium wall in order to inspire the youth who played basketball there after school. He had previously tried many techniques to get the kids’ attention but, with this one, they took notice.⁸⁹ In a January 2015 interview, Reverend Gordon said, “these guys might not read their Black history book, but they’ll read the wall.”⁹⁰ The title of the work derives its name from Hebrew’s 12:1-3 in the Bible, which reads:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us... Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

The story of the cloud of witnesses is a favorite among Christians, which has served as a popular theme in religious art since the Renaissance. It seems that Reverend Gordon never set out to create a “cloud of witnesses,” but with a bit of hindsight, the title suited, and later guided the artwork.

As an independent, self-taught artist, Reverend Roland Gordon may not have directly drawn inspiration from the African American muralists that preceded him, but it is clear that he shares similarities with them in his inspirational motivations and goals while creating of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. His use of murals to document and present alternative historical narratives and instill pride in African American youth is certainly in keeping with the 20th century African American tradition of mural-making. It is unknown as to what extent Reverend Gordon may have been aware of this movement, but based on conversations, his efforts to recreate this type of art were not intentional. It appears that his goal was simply to find a way to get young people to pay attention and to identify positive role models around them. Like many muralists, the Reverend was motivated and influenced by the community that surrounded him. In turn, his artwork serves as a reflection of the community and social climate in which it was created.

The Great Cloud of Witnesses as a Living Folk Artist Environment

As a living folk artist environment, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* (1980–present) is still growing and adapting as Reverend Gordon continues to add layers to his masterpiece. His work is significant as an example of self-taught folk art that simultaneously embodies the characteristics of 20th century African American Muralism. Contributions from Susan Cervantes, well-known artist, founder of Precise Eyes Muralists, and a pioneer of San Francisco’s mural

⁸⁸ Harris, Michael D. “Urban Totems: The Communal Spirit of Black Murals,” in *Walls of Heritage, Walls of Pride: African American Murals*, Robin J. Dunitz and James Prigoff (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 2000), 42.

⁸⁹ Ingleside Presbyterian Church. *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

⁹⁰ Kwong, Jessica. “Ingleside Church Seeks to Preserve Inspirational Symbols as Area Demographics Shift.” *SF Examiner*, January 5, 2015. Accessed via <http://archives.sfoxaminer.com/sanfrancisco/ingleside-church-seeks-to-preserve-inspirational-symbols-as-area-demographics-shift/Content?oid=2915903>

movement; along with Selma Brown, Ronnie Goodman, and prominent African American artist, Eugene White, add to the significance of the mural.

A complexly interwoven account of “witnesses,” each section of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* tells a chapter of the story. For instance, the Church Family Room, provides the viewer with the history of the church, its founding, and the genealogy of the church family through historic newspapers, photos and church records. Much of this section includes information on the founding congregation to serve, not only as inspiration, as a visual reminder of the church’s history and previous congregations. In the Willie Brown Room, Jr. Room, Reverend Gordon honors the work and political career of his friend, and San Francisco’s first African American Mayor. In the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, Reverend Gordon has used stark black-and-white images to create a somber, breathtaking tribute to the civil rights leader; in this room the power of his artistry is on display. More than any other room, he uses a handful of images repetitively and orthogonally for maximum impact, the recessed light highlighting a colorful painting of Jesus and a cross. In the Obama Technology Center, the style adapts to tell the best story in honor of the first African American president. A life-size cut out of the President is glued to wall, and as a work-in-progress, the mural-collage’s composition is more sparsely arranged. In here, Reverend Gordon uses a palette of red, white, and blue and American flags to convey pride and patriotism.

Typically, in *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, Reverend Gordon presents a chronological story of the role model’s rise to success and their biggest achievements. Common themes include Xeroxed repeating images, free-floating faces/heads, the Pan-African colors of red, black, and green, and honorary tributes to parishioners in the form of candid photos, newspaper clippings, and obituaries. The Gymnasium and Legacy Rooms are more thematic and dedicated to pop-culture icons and provide a more general overview of African American accomplishments in recent decades. For instance, the door to the Women’s Restroom is more feminine with shades of pinks and purples and covered with images of female entertainers throughout history. To identify all of the themes and interwoven symbolism of the Great Cloud of Witnesses would be a rewarding and challenging undertaking.

Documentation of African-American History

Overall, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* provides an unprecedented glimpse into Black life, achievements, and icons throughout history and across disciplines. It demonstrates Reverend Gordon’s view of life as an urban spiritual leader and portrays the community interests, while cataloging broader American pop-culture trends, particularly those of the past four decades. It illustrates Black life, including successes and struggles and life in San Francisco when African American’s were the neighborhood’s majority population. Every legend of the recent past has a presence, from famous performers, such as Michael Jackson, to sports stars, such as Muhammad Ali. Reverend Gordon has managed to keep the mural very current, and unexpectedly secular, while simultaneously weaving religious overtones throughout. Drawing its name from the Bible, Reverend Gordon’s interpretation of the verse presents every person in his collage-mural, famous or common, as a “witnesses” – a testament to the success of avoiding sins, such as crime and drugs, which may impede the viewers’ accomplishments. Through its vastness, Reverend Gordon encourages the viewer to find a story or role model that speaks to them and, to illustrate that adversities, such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and race are no excuse for greatness.

As a collage-mural of photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, and painted portraits of African American leaders, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* is the pride of the church congregation. It is one of the few tangible reminders of San Francisco’s first Black middle-class neighborhood and it demonstrates the church’s important role of promoting accountability, success, and education among Black youth – particularly boys, in San Francisco. Reverend Gordon calls this his “greatest work” and a “labor of love.” A quote from his booklet on the mural helps to articulate his sentiments:

Former Mayor Willie Brown considers it my legacy to San Francisco. My prayer is that people of all races (especially African American youths) will be blessed by learning the truth about the rich contributions the sons and daughters of African descent have made to civilization and most especially to our country.⁹¹

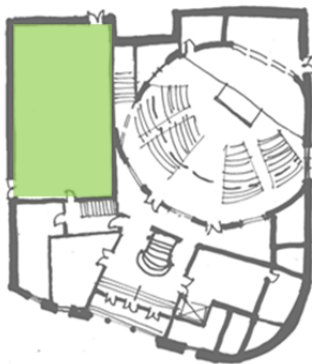
Description of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*

The Great Cloud of Witnesses begins in the entrance lobby, and features a blue sky and cloud themed painted ceiling with the artwork's title prominently painted in black, serifed letters. A patchwork of multi-colored clippings and photos are glued to the walls. From the lobby, the collage-mural spreads throughout the building covering walls, ceilings, doors, support beams, and even exposed ductwork. Much of the collage-mural has been adhered with Elmer's glue, although some portions are attached with thumbtacks, are in picture frames, or include plaques that have been nailed to the walls. The majority of the ceilings at both the first and second floors are painted sky blue as an extension of the lobby ceiling; however, some ceilings are covered with the collage-mural.

All of the walls covered in the collage-mural are considered to be part of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. Reverend Gordon's efforts are an ongoing work-in-progress. At this time, the only rooms not covered with the collage-mural are the sanctuary and the kitchen. The following section provides a detailed description of the main rooms included in *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, including unique situations, predominant themes, and a not-to-scale floor plan to indicate the rooms' location (highlighted in green).

First Floor Description of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*

On the first floor, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* covers portions of the lobby, The Ingleside Church Family Room, The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Study, and the Gymnasium.



Gymnasium (now known as the Rev. Gordon Fellowship Hall)

The gym is, by far, the most impressive and impactful portion of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. The walls of the gymnasium are entirely covered in clippings, plaques, and framed artwork and form the largest, most powerful concentration of images within the building. The collage-mural spans from the floor to approximately 25 feet up to the base of the trusses, where a painted, commissioned portion of the collage-mural is located.

Located at the building's southeast corner, the Gymnasium is a full-height gym with hardwood floors that have been painted with lines and markings typical of a basketball court. The ceiling is covered in Thermax silver foil-colored sheathing and is supported by a series of wooden trusses. Between the trusses are four equally spaced skylights and several hanging pendant lights. At this point, a painted mural lines the top 6 feet of the gym across all four walls. The background is composed of colors reminiscent of a sunset sky, and features 10 painted portraits of civil rights leaders, activists, and athletes: Joe Louis, Sojourner Truth, Mary McLeod Bethune, Frederick Douglass, Thurgood Marshall, Jackie Robinson, Harriet Tubman, W.E.B. Du Bois, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and Jesus Christ – these two embrace with their arms outstretched as if they are preaching the same message. Below them are the words, "The Great Cloud of Witnesses" and below that are the words "...and shall call his name Im-man'u-el' Is. 7:14"⁹², both are

⁹¹ "Our Pastor," Ingleside Presbyterian Church, accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.inglesidepresbyterian.org/OurPastor.php>

⁹² This verse is taken from Isaiah 7:14 of the Bible. Isaiah 13-15 (as excerpted from the New International Version) reads as follows;

painted in a cursive script. Susan Cervantes of Precita Eyes Muralists completed the mural, with assistance from Selma Brown and Ronnie Goodman (with assistance by Marta Ayala and Patricia Rose). The painted commission was funded by a Community Development Block Grant from the San Francisco Mayor's Office.

The congregation refers to the Gymnasium as the "Rev. Gordon Fellowship Hall," a name coined by parishioner Martha McCune, to recognize the work and contributions that Reverend Gordon has made to both the church building and the community. When the space is not used for afterschool programs and basketball games, it is the congregation's fellowship hall, where dinners, meetings, and workshops are held.

In 2010, Reverend Gordon commissioned Eugene White, a San Francisco-based African American artist, to add another layer to the mural; a series of 13 circular portraits painted on plywood that were then screwed into the wall on top of the 1992 mural. These cartouche-like portraits were commissioned by the church to pay tribute to local and national leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. The mural includes depictions of: Reverend Amos C. Brown, leader of the largest Black Baptist Church in San Francisco and the oldest in the western United States; Thad Brown, Tax Collector for the City and County of San Francisco; Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr., San Francisco's 41st mayor (and first African American mayor); Robert L. Demmons, Chief of the San Francisco Fire Department (the first African American to serve as such); Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett, physician and activist; Leonard "Lefty" Gordon, Executive Director of Ella Hill Hutch Community Center; Geraldine Johnson, labor leader and community activist; Martha McCune, San Francisco Unified School District educator; Lulann McGriff, social worker and civil rights leader; Alex Pitcher, attorney and civil rights leader; Doris Ward, past member and president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors; Eugene White, artist and studio/gallery proprietor; and Reverend Cecil Williams, pastor of Glide Memorial Methodist Church.



Panorama of The Great Cloud of Witnesses covering the walls of the gymnasium.

"13 Then Isaiah said, 'Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. 15 He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right,'"



View of the gym looking towards the north wall.



View of the gym looking towards the south wall.



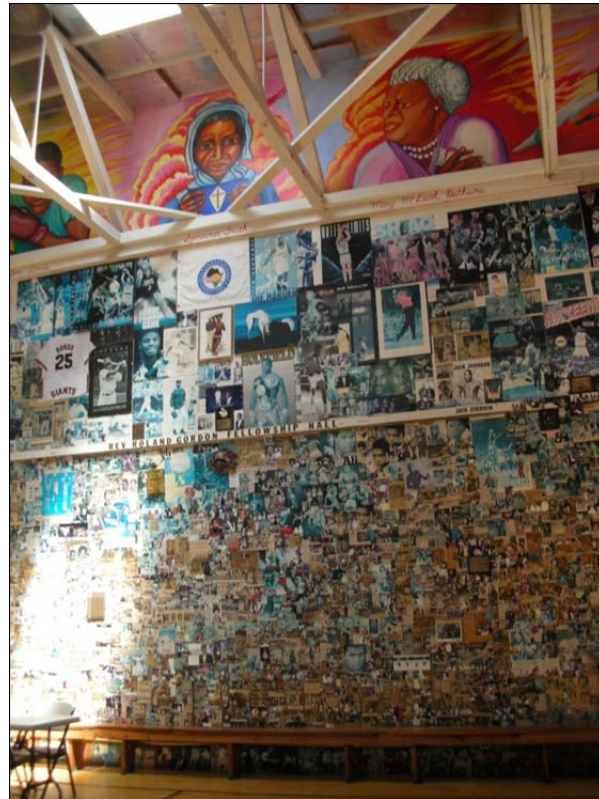
View of the Southwest corner; note that the collage covers the exit doors. (Top Left); View of the northeast corner near the basketball goal. (Top Right); Detail of the collage-mural featuring John F. Kennedy. (Bottom left); Reverend Gordon points to the first image that he pasted of Muhammad Ali. (Photo Credit: KQED)



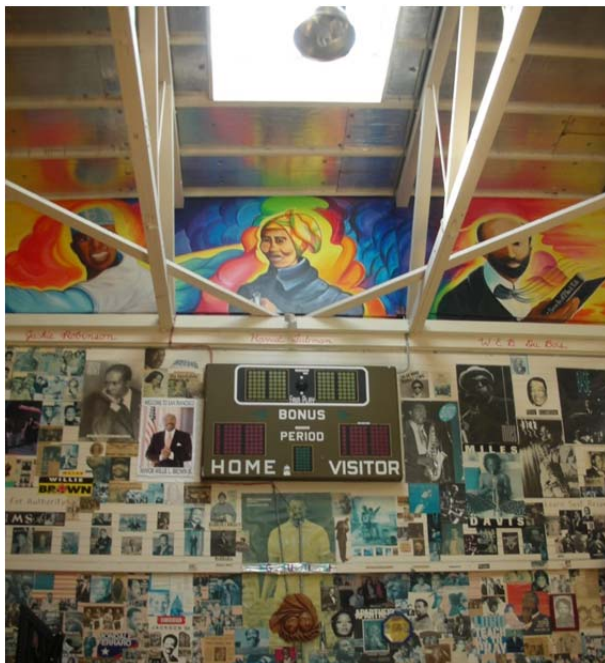
Detail of the collage-mural's layers of images. (Photo Credit: KQED)



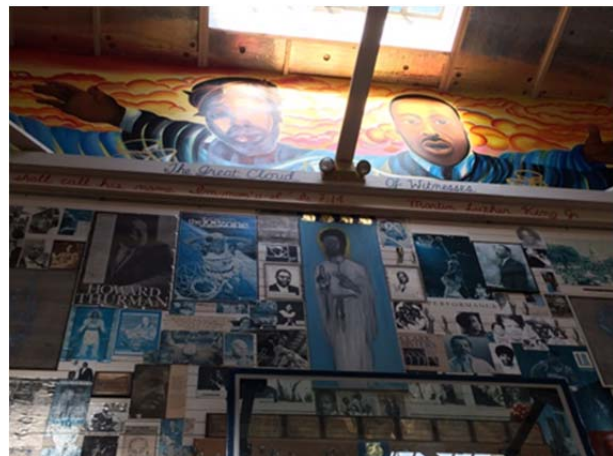
Detail of the collage-mural's layers of images and clippings. (Photo Credit: KQED)



Overall view of the eastern wall showing the collage-mural below and a portion of the 1992 mural above.



A portion of the 1992 mural, above, depicts Jackie Robinson, Harriet Tubman and W.E.B. Du Bois (from left to right). (Photo Credit: Planning Department)



Detail of painted portraits of Jesus Christ (left) and Martin Luther King Jr. (right), by Susan Cervantes, Selma Brown, and Ronnie Goodman.



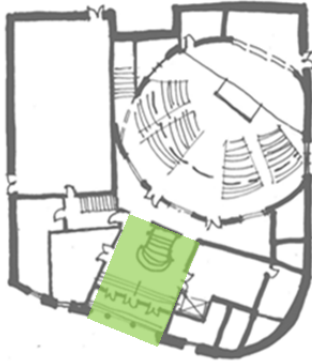
Detail of the painted mural featuring portraits of Mary McLeod Bethune (left, painted in 1992); and Thad Brown (right, painted in 2010).



Detail of the painted mural featuring Doris Ward (far left, painted in 2001); Frederick Douglass (left, painted in 1992); Luanne McGriff (right, painted in 2001); and Thurgood Marshall (far right, painted in 1992).

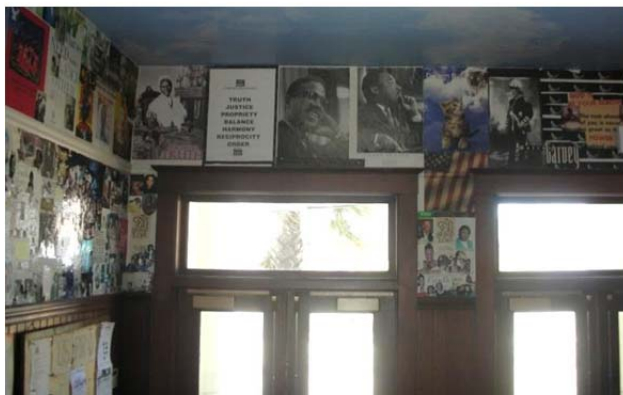


Reverend Roland Gordon in front of The Great Cloud of Witnesses in the gymnasium. (Photo Credit: internationalmediatv.com)

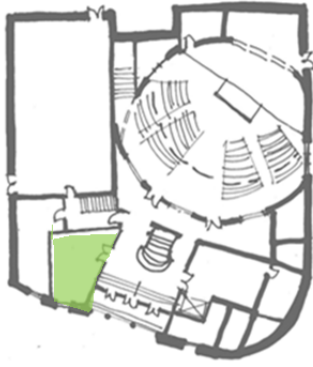


Entrance Lobby

The mural originated in the gymnasium, but as parishioners and visitors enter the church, the mural is first seen in the entrance lobby. In this room, the ceiling is painted sky blue with white clouds. Large black letters that read, "The Great Cloud of Witnesses" greet visitors. The entrance lobby also features a brass and crystal chandelier with a collage of faces glued to the ceiling to form a ceiling medallion around it.



View toward the vestibule from the main entrances (Top Left); Chandelier and ceiling medallion (Top Right); View towards the entrance doors (Bottom Left) (Photo Credit: Planning Department); Detail of the collage-murals clippings and images (Bottom Right) (Photo Credit: Planning Department)



Ingleside Church Family Room

Located to the east of the entrance lobby this room features a patchwork of 4x6 inch photographs, black and white Xeroxed copies, and framed portraits, depicting members of the church's congregation. The collage-mural is largely concentrated on the south wall between the wainscoting (appears to be non-historic) and electrical conduit that forms a picture rail, of sorts. *The Cloud of Witnesses* extends to the east and west walls as well, but more sparsely and with bigger photographs. The room has a central crystal chandelier and linoleum flooring. A paneled wood door, in its historic configuration, is one on the east wall leading to the kitchen (known as the "The Larry Mitchell Kitchen"). The kitchen is not discussed as it does not currently contain *The Great Cloud of*

Witnesses, and there are no plans to extend the collage-mural into this room.)



The largest concentration of the collage-mural is found on the south wall of the Ingleside Church Family Room.



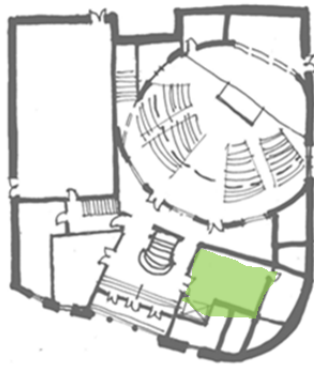
View of the east wall. The paneled wood door leads to the kitchen.



Detail of the double doors leading to entrance lobby.



Detail of the church family portion of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. (Photo credit: Planning Department)



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Study

Located to the right of the entrance lobby, through a set of half-glazed, wooden double doors, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Study is dedicated to civil rights leaders. Compared to other portions of *The Cloud of Witnesses*, the west and south walls of the Memorial Study have fewer images, are more structured and orthogonally organized, with space between each image, and they are adhered to faux-wood paneling. The images in this area are typically obituaries of church members pasted along the curving south wall and posters on the west wall. The room's biggest impact can be found at the ceiling near the small elevator alcove, where Reverend Gordon has pasted on the ceiling multiple, repetitive black-and-white copies of an orating Martin Luther King, Jr., along with photos of his assassination at the Loraine Motel, and the Memphis sanitation workers strike with the iconic "I am a man" signs. Contrasting with somber black-and-white images, is a colored copy of a painting of Jesus and the Last Supper centered above the elevator doors with gold-painted, wooden cross above. Interestingly, in the Gymnasium, Reverend Gordon has also placed Jesus and Martin Luther King, Jr. next to each other.



View of the west wall.



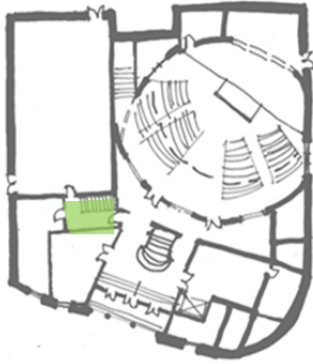
View of the south wall.



Detail of the elevator entrance on the north wall.



Detail of the black and white tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. (Photo credit: Planning Department)

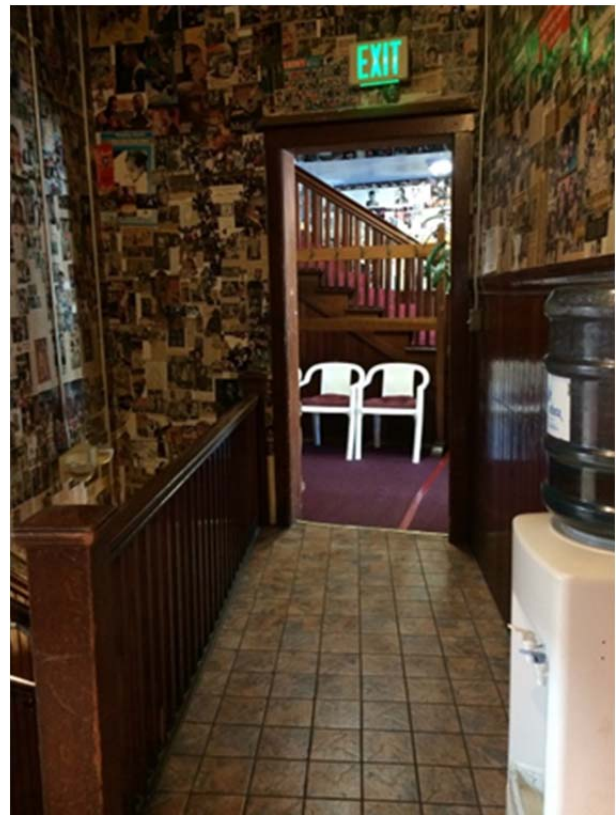


Hallway to the Gymnasium

From the entrance lobby, a cased opening leads to a narrow hallway, with a stair case with a historic wood balustrade descends to the basement. The wall at the right has historic three-quarter-high, board and batten wainscoting. Straight ahead is the cased opening (the door has been removed) that leads to the Gymnasium. A brass plaque that reads, "Rev. Gordon Fellowship Hall" has been nailed to the casing. Deviating from his usual tactics, Reverend Gordon has used thumbtacks and glue to attach several photos to the casing. The collage-mural covers the wainscoted wall only above the chair rail, the other three walls from floor to ceiling, and spans across the entire ceiling. The hallway has been tiled sometime recently with a roughly 6x6 inch ceramic tile.



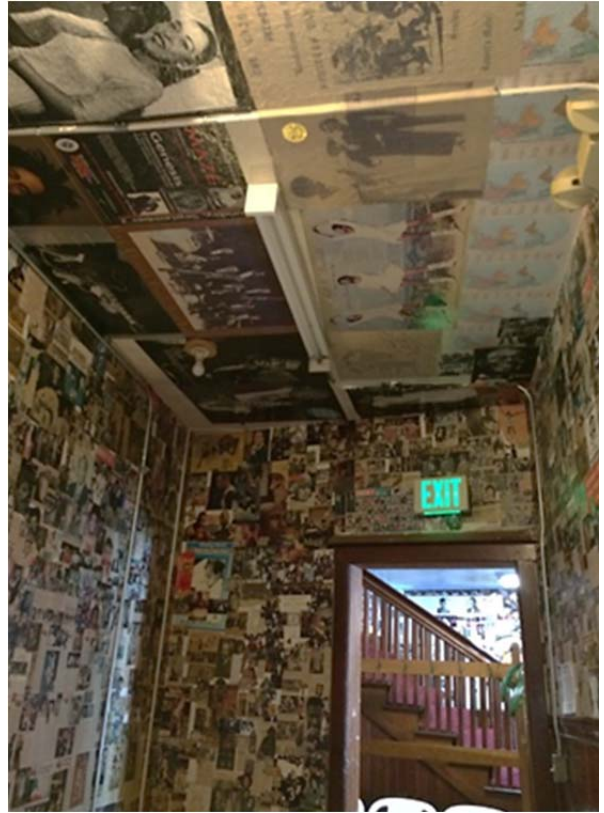
View of the east wall looking into the Gymnasium. Note the brass plaque above the doors, which reads, "The Reverend Gordon Fellowship Hall." (Photo Credit: Planning Department)



View of the west wall looking into the entrance lobby.



Detail of The Great Cloud of Witnesses. (Photo Credit: Planning Department)



Detail of The Great Cloud of Witnesses, note the images pasted to the ceiling.

Second Floor Description of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*

The main functions and public spaces of the church are found on the first floor, but the second floor does provides access to the sanctuary's balcony and some of the church's offices, restrooms, and meeting spaces. The second floor can be accessed from the main staircase (in the entrance lobby) and from the elevator (in the MLK, Jr. Study). *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* continues throughout this level and can be found in the Willie Brown, Jr. Community Room; the Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins Education Library; the Legacy Room II; the Michael Jackson Room (referred to by Roland Gordon as "Michael's Room"); and the Nelson Mandela Bathroom.



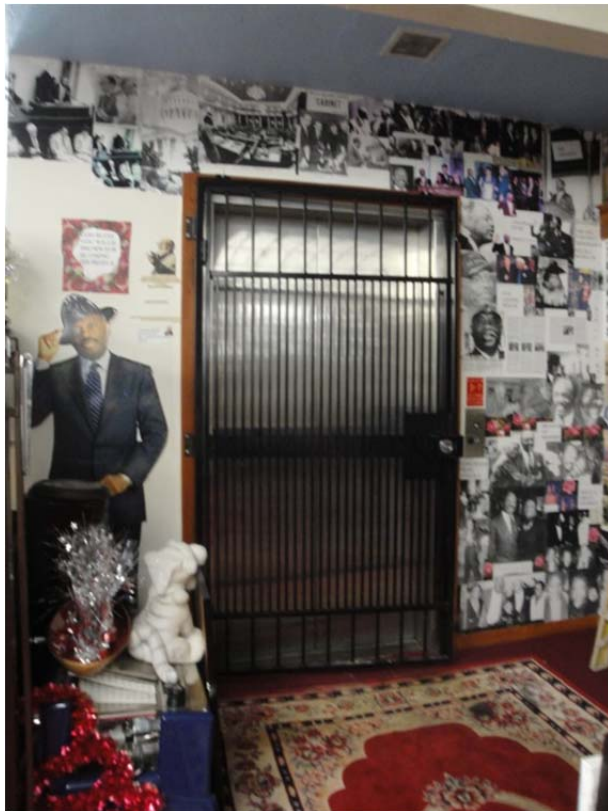
Willie Brown, Jr. Community Room

Located at the northeast corner of the building, above the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Study, this large room serves as the second floor elevator lobby and conference room. It features a curving wall at the northeast corner that responds to the building's curving corner floor plan. A narrow beam supported by two round lally columns running east-west through approximately center of the room. All walls in the room are covered in the historic three-quarter height wood wainscoting that is capped with a chair rail, mural-collage covered drywall, and a picture rail that is approximately one foot from the ceiling and aligns with the top of the door and window casings. The picture rail is painted with green, red, and black bands. The drywall

between the picture rail and the ceiling is currently painted white and the ceiling is painted blue (though no clouds have been painted, as of yet).

Named in honor of Mayor Willie Brown, Jr., the room features a chronologically arranged mural of the Mayor's life. According to Reverend Gordon, Willie Brown has seen the mural a number of times. While in office, Mayor Brown sponsored the publication of a small booklet about *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* and referred to it as a "special treasure" that is "truly magical."⁹³ Over the years, Mayor Brown has been a strong supporter of Reverend Gordon's work.

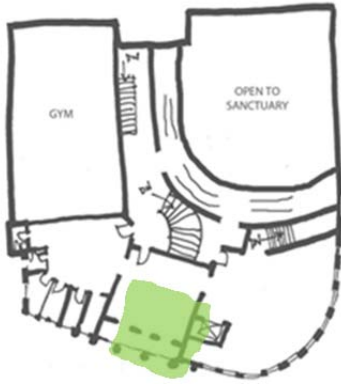
⁹³ City and County of San Francisco Mayor's Neighborhood Beautification Fund and the San Francisco Office of Children, Youth and Families, "The Great Cloud of Witnesses," print version, also available online: <http://www.inglesidepresbyterian.org/GreatCloud/index.php>



View towards the western wall (Top Left); Detail of the Mural-collage on the south wall (Top Right). Detail of the Elevator entrance on the north wall (Bottom Left). Reverend Gordon standing in the room; the building's exterior curving wall is behind him. (Photo Credit: Planning Department)



Detail looking into an alcove. (Photo Credit: Planning Department)



Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins Education Library

Located to the east (left) of The Willie Brown, Jr. Community Room, the library's collage relates to the life and career of the Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins, who served in the California Assembly from 1935-1963 and was the first black politician west of the Mississippi River to serve in the United States House of Representatives (1963-1991).

Like the Willie Brown Jr. Community Room, the library's walls are covered in a three-quarter high, wood wainscoting that is capped with a chair rail, and mural-collage covered drywall. A picture rail, painted in red, green, and black bands, is located approximately one foot from the ceiling and aligns with the top of the door and window casings. The space between the picture rail and the ceiling is currently painted white, and the ceiling is painted sky blue (though no clouds have been painted, as of yet). *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* is largely concentrated on the south wall, between the wainscoting and the picture rail. Two wooden, paneled doors that lead to the Legacy Room are located on the east wall, along with built-in cabinetry, that appears to be a later addition.



View of the south wall: note the painted picture rail.



View towards the east wall.



This room is currently a work-in-progress. Many bottles of Elmer's glue were found in the room.



Legacy Room II

Accessed from the library, Reverend Gordon refers to this room as the Legacy Room II. In contrast to some of the other rooms, here, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* does not focus on a specific theme or person; rather it showcases a collage of personal photographs along with historical and contemporary figures. Like the previous two rooms, the Legacy Room II's walls are covered in a three-quarter height wood wainscoting that is capped with a chair rail, mural-covered drywall, and a picture rail that is approximately one foot from the ceiling and aligns with the top of the door and window casings. The wainscoting and chair rail are painted white and covered with the collage mural, while the picture rail is painted with green, red, and black bands. The

space between the picture rail and the ceiling is currently painted white, and the ceiling is painted blue (though no clouds have been painted, as of yet). *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* collage is throughout the room, and covers the walls, wainscoting, chair rail and space above the picture rail in some places.

The larger Legacy Room II, contains the "Nelson Mandela Bathroom" (also described below) that is located at the east end of the room along with a series of three, smaller rooms created by a non-historic partition wall. At this time, only the small, center room, known as the "Michael Jackson Room" (described below), is included as part of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*.



View looking towards the west wall.



Detail of the south wall. Note the inclusion of the zodiac plaque into *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*.



Looking across the north wall towards the east wall. This (non-historic) partition wall creates three smaller rooms within the Legacy Room.



Detail of a collection of Whitney Houston photos at one of the doors along the north wall.



Michael Jackson Room

This small room serves as an upstairs kitchen; it houses a refrigerator, microwave, and table with chairs. As it was a later alteration, the walls are only drywalled and do not have the historic millwork found in the other rooms. A strip of blue painter's tape (located at approximately the same height as the wainscoting in other rooms) creates a faux chair rail. Above this, clippings and posters of Michael Jackson cover the walls up to the ceiling. Just above the painter's tape on the west wall, Reverend Gordon has hand-written a message that reads, "Tribute to My Home Boy, Michael. 'For Shining to the Glory of God.' Much Love! Roland (aka) 'Rev. G. 8/25/09.'" Two other messages in the room read, "We are the World," and "We are the Children."



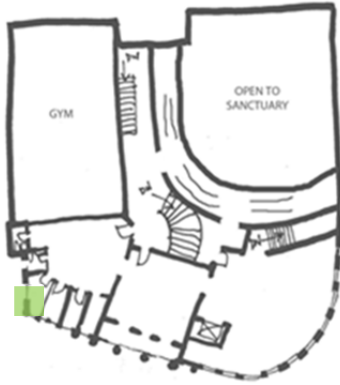
View looking into the Michael Jackson Room.



Detail of the west wall of the Michael Jackson Room.



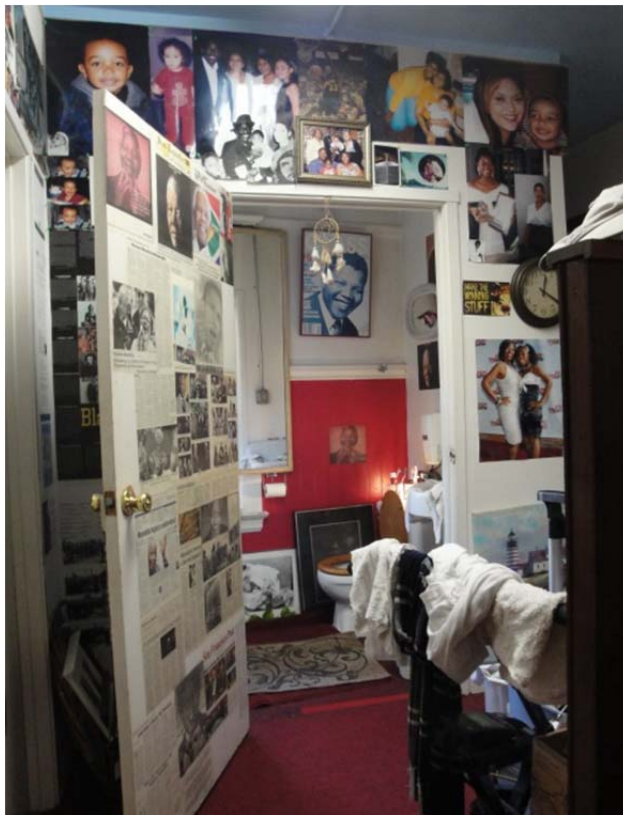
Detail of Reverend Gordon's handwritten message on the west wall.



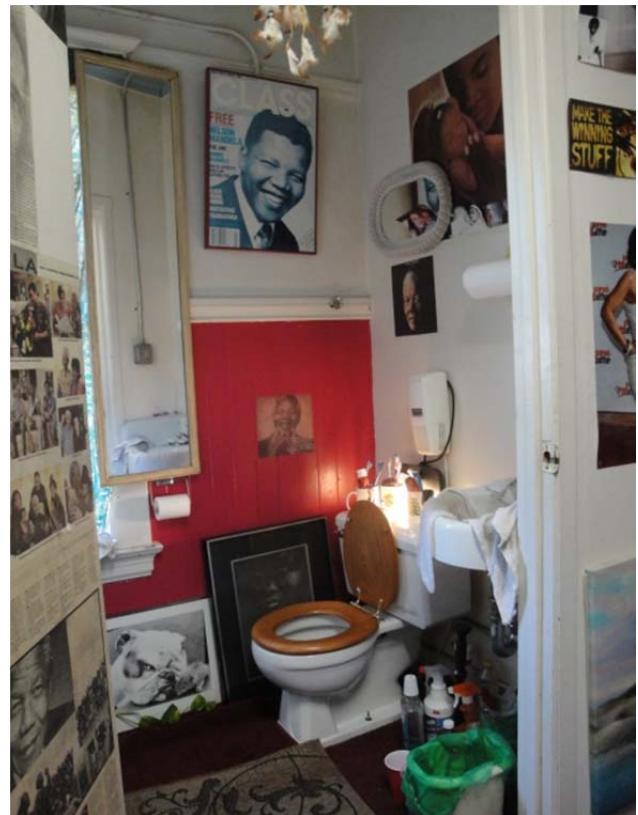
Nelson Mandela Bathroom

A later addition to the church, this small half-bathroom has a toilet and a very small, wall-mounted sink. The bathroom has one historic wall with the typical millwork composition of three-quarter height paneling, capped with a chair rail, with mural covered drywall, and a picture rail that aligns with the window casings. The door and other partition walls were added sometime later.

The picture rail and chair rail are painted white, and the wainscoting has been painted red. Images of Nelson Mandela have been adhered to the interior walls and the inside door; but according to Reverend Gordon, the room is still a work-in-progress.



View looking into the bathroom.



View of the east wall of the bathroom with the historic wood millwork configuration.

Basement Description of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*

The basement spaces span across the northern half of the basement, as the other half is not habitable space. This level houses The President Barack Obama Technology Center, a lobby area with an attached side room, and Legacy Room I, all of which feature pieces of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. The basement is accessible from the first floor via the elevator in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Study and via two staircases. The walls above the wainscoting of the western staircase are largely covered with anniversary announcements, event programs, obituaries of Ingleside's church family along with other San Francisco residents, and newspaper articles about the church and Reverend Gordon.



View of the western staircase ascending from the basement.



Detail of obituaries on the western staircase's east wall.



Basement-Level Elevator Lobby

The small elevator lobby with an adjacent side room is located between the technology center and Legacy Room I. The elevator opens into the room from the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library above. Here, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* covers the walls, from floor to ceiling – the collage-mural is often found at the basement level spanning from floor to ceiling and covering the ceiling and any support beams and ductwork. There is no dominant theme to this area it appears to be a miscellaneous collection of clippings and posters. There is one painted wooden paneled door where the raised panels have been covered with the collage-mural and one flat, presumably hollow-core, door with cut out HVAC vents that have been covered with photos of Muhammad Ali – Reverend Gordon calls this door “Ali’s Door.”



View looking towards the west wall (towards the Obama Technology Center).



View looking towards the elevator doors on the north wall.



Views looking towards the west wall from the far east wall near the staircase.



Detail of "Ali's Door."

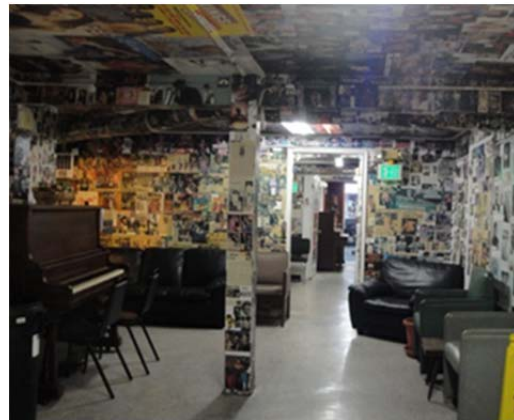
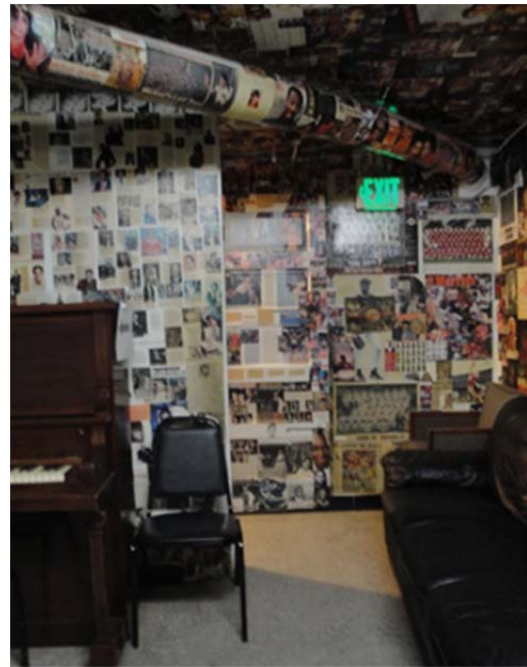


Legacy Room

Accessed from the Basement-Level Elevator Lobby, the Legacy Room is similar to the Legacy Room II on the second floor, as it contains a mixture of portraits, rather than a unified theme. The mural-collage covers all four walls, the ceiling, ductwork, a square support column in the middle of the room, and the raised panels of a wooden door. Two wood paneled doors lead to the men's and women's restrooms, along the north and east walls.



Detail of the door to the women's restroom. (Photo Credit: KQED) (Top Left); Corner of the room (Top Right)



View of the collage-mural from floor to ceiling (Top Right); View looking east across the Legacy Room (Bottom Right).



President Barack Obama Technology Center

The technology center is located at the building's northeast curving corner (below the Willie Brown, Jr. Community Room). The walls are drywalled and, typical of the basement; lack any of the traditional ornamental millwork. The walls are painted white and display clippings and posters of President Barack Obama from floor to ceiling. The ceiling is painted sky blue and features a number of surface mounted fluorescent tube light and ceiling mounted fixtures. The floor is covered in black and white checkerboard-patterned vinyl composition tile.



View looking towards the curving west wall.



View looking towards the east wall.

Images of President Obama cover the walls from floor to ceiling, though they tend to be larger images and more sparsely placed as compared to some of the older portions of the collage-mural. Multiple American flags are hung in the room. A sign, by artist Eugene White dated August 10, 2011, has been painted with red, white, and blue letters that read "President Barack Obama Technology Center." The flags and the painted signs are considered contributing elements to *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*.



View looking towards the south wall; note the almost-full height image of Obama pasted to the wall.



Detail of the hand-painted lettering by Eugene White above the bi-fold closet doors.



Reverend Gordon in the Legacy Room. (Photo from the San Francisco Examiner (Photo Credit: Mike Koozman. January 2015.)

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

This section of the report is an analysis and summary of the applicable criteria for designation, integrity, period of significance, significance statement, character-defining features, and additional Article 10 requirements.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Check all criteria applicable to the significance of the property that are documented in the report. The criteria checked are the basic justification for *why* the resource is important.

- ☐ Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- ☐ Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Statement of Significance

Characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation:

Anchoring this section of the Ocean Avenue streetscape, the church's monumental scale and unusually strong street presence is commensurate with its original post-Earthquake need to house nine protestant congregations and a community center for the "western Twin Peaks district of the city." When the church was completed, this programmatic need was said to be "different among churches", "offer[ing] to the church world...a new ideal." The church's first pastor chose to build a gymnasium, instead of including a pipe organ, in order to reach out to youth – the same community-oriented philosophy that attracted Reverend Gordon to the church almost sixty years later.

Significant Architecture and Work of a Master

Constructed in 1923, Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center is architecturally significant for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction and as the work of a master architect and developer, Joseph A. Leonard. With its tripartite composition; symmetrically composed façade; dentiled cornice; and centrally located, full-height portico capped with a pediment and supported by Ionic columns and pilasters, Ingleside Presbyterian Church illustrates the distinctive characteristics of the Neoclassical style that was popular in the decades following Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian exposition.⁹⁵ Ingleside Presbyterian Church is a unique example of Neoclassical style ecclesiastical architecture in the city. Architect Joseph A. Leonard was well-known locally for his Craftsman style Richmond Heights (1908) and Ingleside Terraces (1910) residence parks when he was chosen as the church's architect. Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center is one of Leonard's few extant religious structures.

High Artistic Values

The interior collage-mural, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, embodies high artistic values and is culturally significant. As a collage-mural created by Reverend Roland Gordon, the artwork makes significant contributions to the study of American Folk Art, African American Muralism, and particularly as a Folk Artists' Environment in San Francisco dedicated to African American history. The composition and the techniques used make *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* makes it an exceedingly rare Folk Artists' Environment. Reverend Gordon's overall arrangement across multiple

⁹⁵ McAlister, Virginia and Lee.

rooms and floors, the expansive size that encompasses most of his church's interior, his distinctive choice of media (predominately paper clippings and copies, mixed with painted murals, and found objects) and collage techniques is unparalleled on this scale. The creation of constructed themes (such as legacy rooms and rooms dedicated to individual role models), and the mix of contemporary pop-culture icons, combined with San Francisco political leaders, and working-class church family members was initially intended to provide all-inclusive range of role models. In retrospect, those 35 years of role models now provides a comprehensive view of African American achievements and accomplishments throughout history. *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* provides an illustrated history of the church itself, and its post-1906 Earthquake beginnings, the community at large and highlights prominent people who have helped to shape San Francisco. A work-in-progress since 1980, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* is a rare tribute and the largest, most imaginatively executed Folk Artists' Environment dedicated to religion, culture, African American history and role models in the country.

Periods of Significance

Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center and *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* each have one period of significance.

1923: The first period of significance is 1923, representing the construction date of Ingleside Community Church at 1345 Ocean Avenue by master architect/developer Joseph A. Leonard.

1980 - Present: The second period of significance is 1980 to the present-day, representing the start of Reverend Roland Gordon's collage-mural, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, until the present day and as it continues to be a work-in-progress.

Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance established above. Cumulatively, the building at 1345 Ocean Avenue retains a high degree of integrity to convey its architectural significance, as well as its continual use by the Ingleside Presbyterian Church.

It, likewise, retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Based on a review of the building permit history and visual inspection, the exterior alterations are relatively limited in scope and remain subordinate to the buildings overall design and ornamentation. Similarly, interior spaces have experienced few alterations, excluding the ongoing *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, and readily convey their associations with the buildings historic use.

The original setting has also been maintained as Ocean Avenue remains an active commercial corridor and surrounding area has remained a residential neighborhood.

The Great Cloud of Witnesses, begun in 1980, retains a high degree of integrity to convey its artistic and cultural significance. The collage-mural retains integrity of association, design, workmanship, and feeling. It retains a strong degree of integrity of materials, as some of the older portions have faded or yellowed due to sun exposure. The original setting has been maintained, however as it is work-in-progress, it will grow to include more interior rooms as Reverend Roland Gordon continues to add to the work.

Overall, the Department has determined that the building's primary character defining features, at the exterior are largely unaltered since the building's construction in 1923. At the interior, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* retains a high degree of integrity to convey its historical and cultural significance.

ARTICLE 10 REQUIREMENTS SECTION 1004 (B)

Boundaries of the Landmark Site

Encompassing all of and limited to Lot 50 in Assessor's Block 6942 on the south side of Ocean Avenue, 129.4' east of Granada Avenue.

Character-Defining Features

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 Landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

All exterior elevations, architectural ornament and rooflines of 1345 Ocean Avenue, and identified as:

- Compound cornice, including the pediment, cornice, frieze, dentils, and molding details.
- Configuration of the symmetrical entry portico: including:
 - six Ionic columns (two central columns flanked on either side by an engaged column and pilasters)
 - three stairways located between the portico's column bases, with terrazzo treads and risers,
 - mosaic tile landing with the word "WELCOME;" and
 - three sets of wood paneled, half-glazed, double-leaf doors with single light transoms above;
 - brass cornerstone located in the column base;
 - three hanging globe-style pendant lights centered above each entry door; and
- Configuration of the bays, pilasters, and corresponding breaks in the entablature across the primary and secondary elevations.
- Wooden cross located between the first and second floors at the curving corner.
- Lettering on the building including:
 - At the front of building the word "INGLESIDE," centered within the portico's pediment;
 - "PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER" is centered within the portico's entablature;
 - "INGLESIDE CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER," centered in the entablature at the curving corner; and
 - "WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT. II COR. 5:7," centered in the entablature of the first bay on the Granada Avenue façade.
- Fenestration at the primary elevation, including the double-hung wood-sash windows set in wood surrounds.
- Fenestration at the secondary elevation, including:
 - the two sets of wood paneled double-leaf sanctuary exit doors and one single-leaf wood paneled exit door;
 - the configuration of six multi-light, multi-colored glass sanctuary windows at the first and second floor level, divided by a stucco spandrel panel with stucco casings;
 - the configuration of double-hung, wood-sash windows, including those in the last bay above the exit door, that are currently covered in plywood.

The character-defining interior features of the building are identified as:

- Those associated with the 1923 Joseph Leonard architectural design that have historically been accessible to the public, and depicted in the floor plans or photos of the designation report dated March 16, 2016; including:
 - The Entry Lobby, including the stairs to the lobby level, main staircase materials and configuration, wood wainscot, paneled doors, and casings with pediments above;

- The Gymnasium, including its open volume, trusses, skylights, basketball goals, wooden flooring with basketball court markings, light fixtures, and light pendants.
- The Sanctuary space, including its open volume, the balcony, octagonal dome, supporting wooden knee brackets, redwood coffers, and colored glass skylights, and the configuration and materials of the six-multi-light, multi-colored colored glass windows at the main level and balcony level.
- **The character-defining interior features of the building are those associated with the collage-mural located within the building entitled The Great Cloud of Witnesses that have historically been accessible to the public, and depicted in the floor plans or photos the designation report dated March 16, 2016; including:**
 - All wall surfaces, doors, doorways, casings, moldings, ceiling, and ceiling beams covered with paper clippings or posters, framed artwork, objects and painted portraits and lettering. All millwork throughout the church including wood wainscoting, baseboards, and door casings with entablatures, chair rails and picture rails including finishes (painted or stained).
 1. The Reverend Roland Gordon Fellowship Hall
 2. The Michael Jackson Room
 3. The Barack Obama Technology Center
 4. The Mayor Willie Brown Room
 5. Legacy Room I and Legacy Room II
 6. The Nelson Mandela Bathroom.

It should also be noted that all future conservation and stabilization work to the collage-mural shall be guided by the Architectural Resources Group (ARG) *Existing Conditions Assessment and Recommendations Report*, included as Appendix B within the designation report dated, March 16, 2016.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Historic Name: Ingleside Community Church, Ingleside Presbyterian Church, Ingleside Presbyterian Church and Community Center

Popular Name: Ingleside Presbyterian Church

Address: 1345 Ocean Avenue

Block and Lot: 6942050

Owner: Ingleside United Presbyterian

Original Use: church/community center

Current Use: church/community center

Zoning: NCT – Ocean Avenue Neighborhood Commercial Transit

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Oral Histories

Oral Histories were recorded by Desiree Smith and Milton Smith in October 2014 at Ingleside Presbyterian Church and private residences. Participants included:

Reverend Roland Gordon, October 30, 2014

Vickie Lewis, October 23, 2014

Donald J. Mattade, October 23, 2014

Crystal E. Morris, October 17, 2014

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